

CHAPTER 2

NAVY CUSTOMERS AND THEIR NEEDS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- *Discuss your personal inventory when providing customer service to Navy personnel.*
- *Discuss the personal inventory examples in this chapter.*
- *Discuss the role of the customer and the effectiveness of your performance.*
- *Identify the role of the contact point representative.*

Chapter 1 addressed the need for contact point representatives to improve their face-to-face skills. In this chapter, we will begin breaking down the overall problem involved in face-to-face contact. We will use two methods in doing that:

First, this chapter contains a list of the abilities and traits a contact point representative should have. We will ask you to compare your own abilities and traits with those listed.

Second, this chapter provides examples of incidents that could occur at various contact points. We will ask you to evaluate the performance of the contact point representatives in each example.

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

Much has been written and said about the “can do” spirit of our country. We often see this spirit when the people of this country respond promptly to some great challenge. Our people claim to have the ability, or the “know how,” to deal with the most challenging obstacle. If that claim is true, then we have no excuse for failing to respond promptly to routine tasks as well. Although routine tasks do not motivate us to respond as we would to some challenging obstacle, our responses to both may be equally important.

A “will do” spirit of determination needs to accompany our “can do” spirit. When a customer with a problem asks, “Can you help me?” your reply should

be, “Yes, I can.” To this reply, you should respond with action and an attitude that say, “and I will.”

PERSONAL INVENTORY

Make a personal inventory of yourself as a contact point representative by studying the following checklist of the abilities and traits you should have. The intent of the checklist is to help you learn which abilities and traits you have and which ones you need to develop or to improve upon.

Read the items carefully; then decide which item in each column best describes the ability or trait you have. Do you rate good, poor, or somewhere in between? Being objective in rating yourself isn’t easy, but the checklist can help you identify traits and abilities on which you need to concentrate.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

Are you here?	Or do you need—	
	Some Improvement	Much Improvement
1 Present good personal appearance		Careless about appearance
2 Excellent knowledge of rating		Poor knowledge of rating
3 Good work organization		Poor work organization
4 Office/personnel records in top condition		Office/personnel records sloppy

Self-Evaluation Checklist--Continued

	Are you here?	Or do you need—	
		Some Improvement	Much Improvement
5	Know the sources of correct information		Always have to ask someone else
6	Good command of English (written and oral)		Poor choice and use of words
7	Accept responsibility		Avoid responsibility
8	Considerate of co-workers		After me, they come first
9	Pleasant, outgoing, friendly		Surly, argumentative, sarcastic
10	Treat each customer as an individual		They're just service numbers
11	Treat all customers with equality/fairness		Take good care of friends
12	Give customers only correct information		Give them an answer and get rid of them
13	Considerate of customers' time		Only considerate of own time
14	Genuine interest in customers' problems		Resent problems; they cause work
15	Go the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction		I do my job

EVALUATING THE EXAMPLES

The examples provided in the following section of this chapter provide scenarios that could be considered to be realistic for the activity of a contact point. Each scenario relates to a trait or an ability on the self-evaluation checklist. Keep in mind that the scenarios do not show a true overall view of contact point operations or the performance of contact point representatives.

The scenarios name specific ratings and contact points; however, you should direct your evaluation toward the *person* providing the service, NOT toward the rating or the contact point. No attempt was made to develop examples that could cover every possibility; however, they do cover a range of attitudes and skills that make the difference between good service and marginally adequate service.

The purpose of this chapter is to help you identify actions and attitudes associated with good service.

Therefore, none of the examples cover the first item on the checklist, "Presents good personal appearance." Checklist items 2 through 6 relate more to the requirements of your rating than to the face-to-face skills needed at contact points. Therefore, the examples emphasize the traits and abilities contained in items 7 through 15. These items deal with traits that affect the way you respond to customer needs.

In evaluating the performance of the people described in the examples, you are asked to assume two roles: (1) the role of the customer and (2) the role of the contact point representative.

ROLE OF THE CUSTOMER

The customers at your contact point do not see, and are not particularly interested in, your total work load. They see only your response to their needs at that specific time. Thus, the customers' opinion of your job effectiveness may be as distorted as that described in some of our scenarios, since both deal with only a brief part of a day's work. Some of the scenarios may not provide enough detail to allow you to evaluate the representative fairly. However, you must remember that is also the basis on which your customer evaluates you.

ROLE OF THE CONTACT POINT REPRESENTATIVE

In the role of the contact representative, you are aware of the total work load and responsibilities of the job. Because you have this broader base of knowledge on which to make an evaluation, you may even justify and excuse some of the representatives' actions. In evaluating the examples, don't excuse actions because of a misplaced sense of loyalty to your fellow workers. Remember, you are responsible to all members of the Navy, not just to those in your rating.

SCENARIOS

Each of the following scenarios, or cases, is followed by a checklist of items you are to evaluate from the information given. A brief critique following each item points out the evidence on which you can make an evaluation and suggests possible causes and improvements.

You may find some similarities between the attitudes shown in the examples and your own. That will help you to identify traits and abilities you need to develop or improve upon.

CASE NUMBER 1

MS3 Frost and MSSN Doe come into the Navy at the same time and go through recruit training and A school together. Then they receive orders to the same ship. While they remain together during their time in the Navy and become good friends, their attitudes and ambitions are quite different. MS3 Frost makes his rate the first time up. MSSN Doe takes the test twice and fails both times.

Suppose we interview the two men and see if we can identify some of their differences.

Question: Tell us a little about your job.

MS3 Frost: I like my job. Basically, it involves preparing three meals a day, 7 days a week, either at sea or in port. By using the menu to make breakouts, I have a current knowledge of stores remaining on board. This makes me feel that I have a part in managing inventory. We use the menu to make breakouts of food items and plan for the meals that follow.

MSSN Doe: It's a great job! No responsibilities, easy work, my room and board, and I get paid for it.

Question: MS3 Frost, you said that you like your job. What is it that you like about it?

MS3 Frost: It would be difficult for me to identify one thing that would stand out over another, but the fact that my rating is interesting and that it provides variety means a lot. I enjoy interacting with the crew; and this job provides mean opportunity not only to provide a service, but to talk with each of the crew members. Often this interaction provides me knowledge of what they would like to see more of on the line or items they would prefer to see less of.

Question: MSSN Doe, you said the job is easy. Is that all it has going for it?

MSSN Doe: I guess so. I haven't given it much thought. It's a job. The chief makes out the menu, and tells me what I have to do. I just follow the recipes.

Question: MSSN Doe, you said you have no responsibilities and implied that you don't want to have any. Do you consider responsibility something to be avoided?

MSSN Doe: I do now. The food service officer and the chief are paid more than I am; they should have the responsibility.

Question: Do you agree with this, MS3 Frost?

MS3 Frost: It's true that both the food service officer and the chief are paid more, but I feel they have equal responsibility for their pay. I would like to assume as much responsibility as the chief will allow me to have so that I may learn as many skills as possible. I view these skills as valuable in planning a career either in the military or in the civilian sector. As far as responsibility, I feel that everyone in the food service division has a responsibility to the crew to observe rules of sanitation and to make each meal nutritious and tasty. The food service officer and the chief have the training and experience that qualify them for this, but I have responsibilities also. "There are many ways to do a job—my responsibility is to do it right.

Question: Since the chief prepares the menu, do you really have a choice of what foods you prepare?

MSSN Doe: Who wants to choose? If the menu calls for meat loaf, they get meat loaf, if it calls for mashed potatoes, they get mashed potatoes.

MS3 Frost: I'm not in a position to change the menu, but I do have the latitude to use several recipe variations. That prevents meals from becoming monotonous. Small things such as seasoning sauces and dressed-up leftovers seem to be a big hit with the crew. Because crew size is small, I'm able to place more emphasis on serving those items that are to be served hot or cold at their desired temperature.

Question: Are you serving in the rating of your choice? And if so, why did you choose it?

MSSN Doe: It was my first choice; my dad was a Navy cook years ago, and he said that it was the best rate in the Navy.

MS3 Frost: I chose food service as my career field. The MS rating offers both valuable training and an opportunity to gain valuable experience. Whether I make the Navy a career or return to a job in the civilian economy, the skills of operating a dining facility are the same. So you can see, I'm really placing myself ahead. The basic operation of a good dining facility is no different from that of a good restaurant.

Now that we have talked to MS3 Frost and MSSN Doe, let's ask the chief how he rates them.

They are both dependable, but the similarity ends there. MSSN Doe does what you tell him—no more, no less. I guess the main thing in his favor is that you only have to tell him once. MS3 Frost is completely different. He always wants to know why. Not because he wants to argue, but because he wants to KNOW the nuts and bolts of the operation. He is professional in his attitude toward his job. He finds out what makes food service good, and then he tries to make it better.

EVALUATION OF CASE NUMBER 1

A member's performance is definitely affected by the attitude that is brought to the job. Evaluate both MS3 Frost and MSSN Doe on the following items from the checklist. You should consider their responses to the questions and the chief's comments in forming your evaluation.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
2	Excellent knowledge of rating		Poor knowledge of rating

MS3 Frost's answers to the questions and the chief's comment showed that Frost had a strong interest in his job and the ability to perform it well. He was interested

in more than just following a recipe card; he was concerned with all areas of food service. MSSN Doe's responses showed that he refused to learn anything more about his job than just enough to get by.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
7	Accept responsibility		Avoid responsibility

MSSN Doe preferred to let all responsibility rest with the chief. MS3 Frost felt a responsibility to the crew and demonstrated it by learning all he could about his job.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
9	Pleasant, outgoing, friendly		Surly, argumentative, sarcastic

Both of them rate pretty high on this item. However, MS3 Frost showed more than just a good-natured friendliness toward the crew. He showed an interest in the crew by wanting them to be satisfied with the food as well as the service.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
14	Genuine interest in customers' problems		Resent problems; they cause work

MS3 Frost indicated his interest in providing meals that the members want to eat. MSSN Doe showed no real interest in pleasing the customers.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
15	Go the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction		I do my job

The chief rated MSSN Doe on this item: "MSSN Doe does what you tell him—no more, no less." MS3

Frost used his initiative to prevent monotonous meals and plan his preparation so that food would be served immediately after preparation.

The chief rated both men as being dependable; however, he appreciated the extra interest and effort of MS3 Frost. A more direct means of evaluating these men is to ask yourself the following questions: Which one would you rather have preparing the meals that you eat? Why?

CASE NUMBER 2

It is a cold, blustery Sunday afternoon in Newport. A destroyer has just recently returned from deployment and it is having a good response to visitor's day in spite of the weather.

Dependents and friends of the crewmembers have just enjoyed a sumptuous dinner (compliments of the hardworking food service division). Next on the schedule of events is a movie to be shown on the mess deck for their entertainment. Most of the children and the less adventurous watch the movie, but the more hardy individuals brave the elements to tour the ship.

BMSN Boat and his wife join the tour. It is Mrs. Boat's first visit, and BMSN Boat is proudly showing off his ship. He has shown her around most of the topside areas and is ending the tour on the bridge. Here he names and explains the purpose of the various equipments and explains (probably bragging just a little) how he uses them while steering the ship. Then, deciding that a cup of coffee will make a welcome finish for the tour, they start their return trip to the mess deck.

Mrs. Boat has just started down the ladder when her foot slips and she falls.

The officer of the deck (OOD) turns when he hears the sound of her falling and goes to her. BMSN Boat is already kneeling beside her. "Are you hurt?" he asks anxiously.

"I . . . don't think. . . so. Just kno. . . knocked the breath. . . out of me."

The OOD inquires of BMSN Boat, "Is your wife hurt?"

"I don't think so." Then he asks her, "Do you feel that you could get up?"

Breathing easier, she nods. "If you help me."

BMSN Boat slips his arm beneath her shoulders and starts to raise her. She gasps, "Wait!"

The OOD turns to the petty officer of the watch (POOW), "Pass the word for the Corpsman to lay to the quarterdeck—on the double."

The Corpsman, HM Pistol, arrives immediately on the scene. After being told what has happened, he kneels beside Mrs. Boat and asks, "Are you in pain now?"

"Some . . . Where I hit my back. It hurts when I breathe."

HM Pistol examines Mrs. Boat as quickly as he can and concludes that she has no back injury. "Mrs. Boat," he says, "I'm afraid you have one, possibly two, broken ribs. So as not to move you any more than necessary, we'll make you as comfortable as possible here until the ambulance arrives to take you to the hospital." Turning to the OOD, "I'll need three or four blankets out of sick bay. I'll call for the ambulance."

Mrs. Boat counters, "I can't go to the hospital. There's no one to take care of the baby."

BMSN Boat adds, "I'm in the duty section today."

HM Pistol quickly places the call to the hospital for the ambulance. He explains the probable nature of the injury and the extent of his examination so that the hospital can prepare to receive and treat Mrs. Boat.

As he returns to Mrs. Boat, the messenger arrives with the blankets. Gently, she is placed on one of the blankets and covered with the others. Then, turning to BMSN Boat, HM Pistol asks, "Where is your baby now?"

"A neighbor is keeping her so that my wife could visit the ship."

"Can they keep her for a few more hours?"

"I guess so, but that won't help much. I'll need to take leave."

HM Pistol goes over to the OOD and explains the problem of the Boats' baby. "To complicate matters, Boat is in the duty section today. Can he be given emergency leave until his wife is able to care for the baby? Five days should be sufficient."

The command duty officer (CDO) has been briefed by the OOD and is standing nearby. Overhearing the account of the situation he replies, "Certainly; Boat can go on to the hospital with his wife, and on the way home he can stop by and pickup his leave papers. They will be on the quarterdeck." To the OOD he adds, "Have the leave papers prepared and brought to me for signature, and have the duty section petty officer make the required adjustments to his duty section."

HM Pistol returns to BMSN Boat and Mrs. Boat. "Boat, you are being granted emergency leave for 5 days. We hope that this will be enough time. If not, you may request an extension. You go on with your wife in the ambulance. Then on your way home, stop by and pick up your leave papers—they will be on the quarterdeck. If you would like for me to call your neighbor and explain the situation, just give me the name and phone number."

EVALUATION OF CASE NUMBER 2

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
2	Excellent knowledge of rating		Poor knowledge of rating

True, this was a relatively minor emergency, but the proper response to this minor emergency indicated that proper response would be made to a major emergency as well.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
7	Accept responsibility		Avoid responsibility

The OOD recognized and respected HM Pistol's responsibility as the Corpsman, and HM Pistol assumed his responsibility easily and efficiently. HM Pistol had confidence in his ability, but he also knew his limitations and when to ask for help.

Very likely, he had anticipated the many situations that could arise from having a number of people aboard who were not familiar with shipboard accommodations, and with this anticipation, he had also considered the appropriate responses. After all, isn't that the purpose of shipboard drills—to anticipate possible situations and to train personnel to meet them? This anticipation is also a valuable part of self-training—to anticipate events that could happen and to be prepared to meet them.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
14	Genuine interest in customers' problems		Resent problems; they cause work

Quite often, the contact point representative tends to remain aloof from the customer with the excuse that, "I know what needs to be done, and I'm doing it. The customer should be interested only in results—the mechanics are my business." This attitude may result in some unnecessary surprises for the customer. Since BMSN Boat and Mrs. Boat were understandably anxious about her condition, HM Pistol reassured them as soon as he possibly could. In addition, he did not restrict himself to his professional responsibility, but extended his interest to a personal problem occasioned by the accident.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
15	Go the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction		I do my job

HM Pistol's total performance was made outstanding by his extra steps.

CASE NUMBER 3

Leading petty officer (LPO) Brush leans back in his chair and surveys his smoothly functioning office. All the baskets are empty; all the work caught up. PO Door and SN Christmas are discussing their soon-to-be liberty with eager anticipation. LPO Brush returns to his paperback novel secure in the knowledge that it is going to be a peaceful afternoon. He becomes so engrossed that even a ringing telephone doesn't break his trance until the sixth ring. At that, he says, "One of you #\$\$% move off your #\$\$% and answer the #\$\$% phone."

PO Door picks up the phone. "Personnel office, PO Door speaking . . . Whatya say, Lee? . . ."

SN Christmas looks up at the arrival of a customer. "What can I do for you?"

"I would like to know if you can tell me the qualifications for Radioman School?"

"They don't need any more Radiomen."

"But, the division PO told me that they would before long, and I should start now trying to get in," he replies.

SN Christmas reluctantly gets up and starts for the file cabinet. "What's your name?"

"Boate, Jon T. I'm in the deck force now."

SN Christmas pulls his record and walks to the counts. "Your test scores are not high enough for RM school." He closes the record and starts back to the file cabinet.

"But, the PO said I could get the scores waived based on the needs of the Navy." SN Boate has learned quite a bit about the Radioman rating by completing the Navy's correspondence course for the rating and asking the radio gang a lot of questions—he doesn't want to miss his opportunity to become one of them.

"Everybody's a #S%& expert!"

SN Boate stammers, "He said you waived the scores for. . ."

"Put in a chit! It's no skin off my nose. It won't be approved." He replaces the record in the file and returns to his desk.

"Why?"

"#S%&, we can only waive 10 points, which won't do you any good."

LPO Brush, finally disturbed by the rising voices, looks up from his book and glares at SN Boate, "We don't tell you how to chip the #S%& deck don't try to tell us how to do our #S%& job! You heard what Christmas said. Now quit bothering him; he's got work to do." SN Boate turns and walks away.

LPO Brush shakes his head as he says, "These guys today; no respect at all." He returns to his book, and Door and Christmas resume their discussion of their anticipated liberty.

A few minutes later, PO Seaman enters the personnel office. He has finally received his long awaited orders for shore duty. He has only been transferred twice—to school and then to the ship. Since then he has become a husband and father. Both PO Seaman and his wife are looking forward to the tour of shore duty, but both has several unanswered questions about transferring with dependents. So, PO Seaman enters the personnel office and says, "Hey, Door, you got my orders typed up yet?"

PO Door comes over to the counter. "Not yet. What's your hurry? You won't be leaving for another month."

"What will my detachment date be?"

"I haven't figured it out yet. It depends on how much leave you take and how much travel time is allowed."

LPO Brush looks up from his book, "Door, haven't you typed his orders? You've had them for 2 weeks."

"We've been busy. I'll get it now, Brush. How much travel time and leave does he get?"

"Look it up! I thought your work was all caught up."

"I'll be caught up by the time they sound liberty call."

LPO Brush snorts, "You will be caught up before your liberty starts. PO Seaman, can you come back in about an hour? That should give these geniuses enough time."

"I guess so. Say, I am going to have some furniture to ship. Do you take care of that?"

"Naw. Check with Supply. They should have some answers for you." As PO Seaman leaves the office, LPO Brush goes back to his desk, muttering, "If you want anything done right, you can expect to do it yourself."

EVALUATION OF CASE NUMBER 3

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
2	Excellent knowledge of rating		Poor knowledge of rating
3	Good work organization		Poor work organization
4	Office/personnel records in top condition		Office personnel records sloppy

Other than the somewhat careless approach to preparing PO Seaman's orders, there is not much basis for marking these items. However, LPO Brush would probably give the office a high rating. After all, he thought his office was functioning smoothly.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
6	Good command of English (written and oral)		Poor choice and use of words

Excessive use of profanity is generally considered a vocabulary weakness. The use of profanity by Brush and Christmas did not improve communications; as in most cases, it impaired it. They might have felt that the use of profanity strengthened or emphasized the thoughts or ideas they were expressing, or profanity may have become a speech habit that they used without being aware of it.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
7	Accept responsibility		Avoid responsibility

PO Door was shirking his responsibility for carrying out his assignments, and LPO Brush was lax in carrying out his supervisory responsibility of following up on the work assignments he had made.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
9	Pleasant, outgoing, friendly		Surly, argumentative, sarcastic

As contact point representatives, they have very little in their favor on this item. SN Boate would rate them very low, and PO Seaman probably would say that they are pretty good at making excuses.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
11	Treat all customers with equality/fairness		Take good care of friends

They strike out again. They demonstrated neither equality nor fairness in dealing with customers.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
12	Give customers only correct information		Give them an answer and get rid of them

The information given to SN Boate may have been correct, but they made no effort to convince him. They only intimidated him into accepting it. PO Seaman will need quite a bit of information before he completes his first transfer with dependents and personal effects, but no doubt he will seek it elsewhere.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
13	Considerate of customers' time		Only considerate of own time

An interesting conversation during a personal call is not sufficient reason to delay answering the phone until after the sixth ring. PO Seaman had made at least two trips to the personnel office and would have to make a third to find out what his detachment date would be.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
14	Genuine interest in customers' problems		Resent problems; they cause work

Their only interest in SN Boate was ridding themselves of him and his problem. Both displayed a lack of interest and concern for his desire to choose a rating. PO Door did not consider it necessary to prepare PO Seaman's orders immediately—he felt he had plenty of time. He failed to recognize that the Navy member had responsibilities outside of the Navy. Advance planning is required when a service member has dependents to be relocated—dates are all-important to this planning.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
15	Go the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction		I do my job

The extra step in this case would have been to fully explain what was standing in SN Boate's way of becoming a Radioman. In addition, they could have informed him that retesting was possible under certain conditions and that he might strike for the rating without a school. However, they should have informed him of the handicap that he would face if he didn't receive the advance technical training. In PO Seaman's situation, they should have been able to volunteer information that would make his planning easier.

CASE NUMBER 4

As SN Frost enters the personnel office, PN Doe looks up from her work and asks, "May I help you?"

"I hope so. All my friends are PO3, and I can't even take the test."

"Why?"

"That's what I want you to tell me. I think it's just because my division officer doesn't like me. Can you do anything?"

PN Doe may be able to do a lot of things, but, at this point, helping SN Frost is not one of them. She still doesn't know what SN Frost's specific problem is.

PN Doe says, "Just a minute. Let me get your record." Getting the record from the file, she begins turning the pages. Recommended? No. Performance evaluation? Good. Training completed? Yes. Personnel advancement requirements completed? Now she knows the problem. SN Frost has not completed his PARs for advancement. "The only thing holding you back is the completion of your PARs. Have you asked your division officer about that?"

"Yeah. He said something about it the other day, but I told him I'd already completed it before I transferred here. He acted like he didn't believe me."

PN Doe picks up the phone and locates SN Frost's division officer. "Mr. Brush, this is PN Doe in the personnel office. I am checking SN Frost's record. Do you have his personnel advancement requirements?" She listens for awhile, thanks Mr. Brush, and hangs up.

"Mr. Brush said that your last command didn't send your PARs, and he had made up a new one. The command never entered the completion on your page 4 either, I will write to your previous command for the record. We can hope that it hasn't been lost and that we will receive it before the cutoff date for this exam. In the meantime, I suggest that you talk to Mr. Brush. Tell him the situation, and start completing the PARs for PO3—just in case. There is still time for you to be recommended so that you will be able to take the examination."

EVALUATION OF CASE NUMBER 4

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
2	Excellent knowledge of rating		Poor knowledge of rating

A knowledge of the PN rating is only one part of the PN's job. PN Doe's confidence indicated a good working knowledge of the rating.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
13	Considerate of customers' time		Only considerate of own time

SN Frost's time spent in coming to the personnel office was not wasted. He received the help he needed when he needed it.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
14	Genuine interest in customers' problems		Resent problems; they cause work

Instead of picking up the phone and calling Mr. Brush, it would have been easier for PN Doe to say, "Your PARs have not been entered in your record. Go see your division officer." SN Frost was distrustful of his division officer; he felt that Mr. Brush's dislike for him was the reason he couldn't take the examination for PO3. PN Doe's interest "bridged the gap" somewhat by refuting this suspicion.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
	Some	Much
15 Go the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction		I do my job

PN Doe was doing all that she could for SN Frost. However, her explanation of what had happened, what action she was taking, and what SN Frost should do as an alternative was just as important to the customer's satisfaction.

The value of the "extra step" is difficult to measure, but its effect is easily seen.

CASE NUMBER 5

PO Seaman recently completes a tour of overseas shore duty and he is now on CONUS shore duty at a small station served by the disbursing officer of an activity some distance away. On his previous assignment he and his wife lived in government quarters. Before leaving his previous station, PO Seaman had started an allotment to his wife and had it sent to her parents' address.

PO Seaman isn't surprised when he does not receive a check on the first payday after reporting in; nor is he too concerned when he draws a blank on the second, since his wife has started receiving her allotment checks.

When the third payday still brings no check, he decides that he has waited long enough. He takes his problem to the administration office, and the YN places a call to the disbursing office.

The YN explains to the DK that PO Seaman has now been aboard almost 2 months and has not been paid during that time. The DK obtains PO Seaman's Personal Financial Record and informs the YN that PO Seaman has no pay coming—he is actually overpaid.

"When will the overpayment be liquidated, and when will he receive a check?" the YN asks.

The DK replies, "At the rate he's going—never. He is going deeper in the hole each month."

PO Seaman has heard enough to know that something is wrong. "May I talk to him?" he asks. Taking the phone, he identifies himself and asks what the problem is. The DK gives him a breakdown of credits and deductions. PO Seaman adds them up and exclaims, "Something's wrong! The DK at my last

station said I would draw around \$50 a payday. Are you sure you gave me all the figures?"

"I've given you everything on your LES. Say, are you married?"

"I sure am. That's who the allotment is going to."

"Why aren't you getting BAQ" asks the DK.

"That's a good question. You answer it."

"We can start it now. You'll have to submit an application for BAQ."

"What for? I've been married 5 years. You mean that isn't on my record?" PO Seaman is becoming angry.

The YN motions for the phone and PO Seaman gives it to him.

"Let me speak to the disbursing officer to see if we can straighten this out," he tells the DK.

The DK is glad to oblige; he can't see why PO Seaman is so excited.

When the disbursing officer answers, the YN explains the problem and asks for advice. It doesn't take the disbursing officer long to conclude what has happened—the housing office had not provided the pay order that would have started PO Seaman's BAQ effective the day following his departure. He tells the YN, "Send us a pay order starting PO Seaman's BAQ as of the day he reported. That will take care of the overpayment, and we will send a check for the balance. In the meantime, we will send a letter to the housing office at his former command to request the pay order that should have been provided before he left. As soon as we get that, a check will be issued to cover the balance of PO Seaman's back pay."

EVALUATION OF CASE NUMBER 5

Several actions and failures could be evaluated in this case, but let's concentrate on the response given to the remote customer.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
14	Genuine interest in customers' problems		Resent problems; they cause work
15	Go the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction		I do my job

Facing the customer across the counter isn't always possible; many customer contacts must be handled by telephone. Extra effort is required in these cases to ensure that the contact doesn't become impersonal. Remember, that is a person on the other end of the line—not just a voice!

The DK had lost sight of that fact. He was concerned only with a pay record and a voice.

The disbursing officer could have passed the responsibility back to the YN. The officer could have told the YN to write for the pay order and that PO Seaman's pay would be corrected after it was received. Until then, PO Seaman would have continued his payless paydays. However, he proposed an immediate, partial remedy, even though it would involve additional work for his office. Thus, PO Seaman had the satisfaction of knowing that part of the problem was being corrected THEN. He also explained the additional steps he would take to completely clear up the problem.

CASE NUMBER 6

It had been one of those extremely hectic, tiring days, and PO Brush and SN Pistol were still busy with the last two customers. No one else was waiting, so maybe these customers would be the last for the day. Suddenly their work was interrupted by the sound of a hand slapping the counter and the demand, "A little service here !"

PO Brush muttered under his breath, "A little service is all you'll get." Aloud he said, "Be with you in a minute." He then returned to the customer he was helping.

"Come on! Come on! I haven't got all day!"

SN Pistol replied, "Neither have we. Just 10 more minutes to quitting time."

"Just once, I would like to come into this office without having to stand around and wait."

PO Brush replied, "Did you know that we schedule our busiest part of the day to coincide with your arrival. We were all frightened that you will come in and not have something to gripe about."

"I believe it." To show his further irritation, he then began humming and tapping his fingers on the counter, After awhile he asked, "Why don't you get into a good rating?"

"Such as?"

"Anything but this. Boy, what a waste of time! You guys sit in here all day and twiddle your thumbs."

"What do you want?" SN Pistol asked.

"GO ahead, finish what you're doing. Don't let me interrupt you."

PO Brush finished with his customer and turned to the noisy customer, "Now, what can I do for you?"

"Ah, it's too late now. I'll come back in the morning."

PO Brush was beginning to steam. "You do that. Come in at 0800. Then instead of waiting only 5 minutes, you can wait all day."

EVALUATION OF CASE NUMBER 6

Unfortunately, the checklist does not apply to customers.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
	Some	Much
9 Pleasant, outgoing, friendly		Surly, argumentative, sarcastic

At the end of a busy day and faced with a customer such as this, anyone would have difficulty in maintaining a pleasant, friendly manner. However, nothing is gained by "cutting the customer down" or permitting him to control your temper. Because the customer did aggravate them, PO Brush and SN Pistol would have to make a diligent effort to be pleasant and friendly toward him when he returned the next day.

CASE NUMBER 7

The phone rings and rings and rings and rings.

"D'sbursingofficePistolspeakinsir."

SA Doe, hopeful that he has reached the disbursing office, states his problem, "I have been granted emergency leave starting at 1600, and I don't have enough money to make the trip. One of my friends told me I could get special pay. Can I?"

"Ya'llhaftacomeuptotheoffice." Click!

SA Doe charges up to the office and presents himself at the window. The DK looks up from his desk, "Whatayawant?"

"I just called about special pay, and you said to come on up to the office."

"How much ya need?"

SA Doe thinks to himself, This is great! I was afraid I wouldn't have enough money to get home. Now I'll be able to take a plane. He answers, "\$300 will be plenty."

"Where's your chit?"

SA Doe is taken aback. He looks questioningly at the DK

"Wha—"

"Your special request chit; the XO has to approve it."

"Oh, I didn't know," SA Doe mumbles.

"Well you know now."

SA Doe heads for the division office where he obtains the special request form and fills it out; then he heads back to his division PO for the first signature. PO Boate is helpful in getting his leave approved, and he takes the special pay request to the division officer and the department head. PO Boate explains that the reason SA Doe didn't submit the request earlier was because he was not familiar with the procedures for obtaining special pay. The head of the department approves the request and says that he will take it to the XO to save time.

SA Doe soon has his approved request, and he returns to the disbursing office to get his money. Just as he reaches the office, the DK comes out, closes the door, and locks it.

"Excuse me, when can I get my money? I have the special request approved?"

"I'm gonna eat. Come back after 1300."

At 1300, SA Doe is standing by the door waiting for the DK to return. As the DK approaches, his first words are, "Are you here again?"

"Yes sir. You said to come back at 1300."

"Come on in. If I don't get you outa my hair, I'll never get nothin' done."

The DK takes Doe's special request and goes to the file to pull Doe's financial record. He keeps up a constant one-sided conversation to impress SA Doe with all the work he has to do, the extra work caused by the

special pay request, and the fact that if he wasn't such a nice guy he wouldn't bother with it at all.

"Where'd you get the idea ya had \$300 coming? The most you can draw is \$200."

"I don't know. You asked me how much I wanted. With \$300, I could fly."

"O, boy!! I oughta throw the whole works in the can. Do you want the \$200?"

"Yes sir."

Later, as SA Doe finishes packing, he confides his financial problem to a friend and asks if he can borrow some money from him to be repaid when he returns. His friend says he doesn't have any extra, but he has heard of one man who obtained a loan from the recreation fund.

SA Doe again seeks out PO Boate and asks him about the possibility of getting a loan from the recreation fund. PO Boate goes with him to see the recreation fund custodian and vouches for his need. Only a short time is needed to arrange for the loan of \$100.

EVALUATION OF CASE NUMBER 7

All's well that ends well? Let's consider PO Boate's performance first.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
12	Give customers only correct information		Give them an answer and get rid of them
13	Considerate of customers' time		Only considerate of own time
14	Genuine interest in customers' problems		Resent problems; they cause work

He was very helpful each time SA Doe approached him. But were there three problems or just one problem that required three trips to solve? SA Doe only had one problem—to get home on emergency leave. Sure, PO Boate was helpful, but wouldn't he have been more of a help if, when presented with the leave request, he had asked, "Do you have enough money to make the trip?" His greater knowledge and experience could have

provided that information which SA Doe spent most of the day discovering.

So, we find that PO Boate didn't do so well. Not because of what he did, but because of what he did NOT do. His concern was with the immediate problem—he did not anticipate possible complications. As a result, Boate, SA Doe, the head of the department, the XO, and the DK all wasted time.

Now let's look at DK Pistol's performance.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
6	Good command of English (written and oral)		Poor choice and use of words

He spoke clearly in face-to-face conversation, but not on the phone. Some people speak on the phone as though they were being charged by the minute—they crowd as many words into as little time as possible. That is particularly true when people are answering the phone or repeating frequently used phrases. More attention to grammar and diction will improve telephone communications considerably.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
9	Pleasant, outgoing, friendly		Surly, argumentative, sarcastic

He has much room for improvement. His general attitude was Don't bother me!

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
12	Give customers only correct information		Give them an answer and get rid of them

The information he gave was correct, but he stopped too soon. SA Doe was misled because the DK didn't

want to give Doe any more information than was absolutely necessary.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
13	Considerate of customers' time		Only considerate of own time

He had several opportunities to avoid wasting his and SA Doe's time, but he missed all of them.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
14	Genuine interest in customers' problems		Resent problems; they cause work

Probably his lack of interest was his basic failure. Because he was not interested in the customer, his approach was to handle the immediate problem with the least amount of effort.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
15	Go the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction		I do my job

He was not really interested in the welfare of the customer—he did only what he had to do.

CASE NUMBER 8

A Hospitalman going over a patient's chart in the orthopedic clinic answers the phone, "Orthopedic Clinic, HM Door; may I help you?"

Over the line comes an irate voice, "This is Captain Boat, retired, and I'm really upset. What's going on there? I was referred by primary care to see an orthopedist. Someone at the appointment desk told me it will be 2 months before I can get an appointment. What? Are you kidding! I thought I was to get all of this great care in the military. Is this what you call care? I fought in two wars and gave 30 years of my life to this

country. I was promised health care for the rest of my life.”

HM Door sympathizes, “You sound very upset, Captain Boat.”

“You bet I’m upset. Now I want to know if you’re going to do something?”

“Yes sir,” answers HM Door, “I’m going to help you get the care you need, but first I’d like to explain the situation.”

“Go ahead and explain; I’m listening, but you’d better make it good.”

“Captain Boat, I understand your frustration in trying to access our system. However, we simply don’t have the number of appointments needed to accommodate the enormous volume of patients requesting them.”

“What, are you kidding?” responds the Captain, “I’ve always gotten my health care at the base hospital.”

HM Door continues, “Sir, we do have options for alternative care if you prefer not to wait for a space-available appointment. Our Health Benefits Advisor, Lt. Mary Christmas, can explain these options. She’s the person at the hospital that can solve problems like yours. Would you like to talk with her, Captain Boat?”

“I am having so much elbow pain that I guess it does make sense to talk to someone who can help me get care.”

“I can transfer your call to her right now. Let me give you her phone number in case we’re disconnected. The number is 123-4567.”

“Heath Benefits Officer, Lt. Christmas, may I help you.”

“This is Captain Boat, I retired from the service after 30 years and have been seen many times at the base hospital. I have a referral from primary care to see an orthopedist, but I was told that there were no available appointments for at least 2 months.”

Lt. Christmas responds, “I’m glad you called me, Captain Boat, I can help you locate an orthopedic physician in the local community through our Health Care Finder Program or through our Partnership

Program using your CHAMPUS benefits. Would you like me to explain these two options to you or discuss the benefits offered through CHAMPUS.”

“Perhaps I should come to the hospital to talk with you. I’ll be on the base this afternoon—can I see you then?”

“You sure can. We’re located on the first floor in the patient administration section. I’m looking forward to meeting with you.”

“Thank you, I’ll be there by 1400.”

EVALUATION OF CASE NUMBER 8

Self-Evaluation Checklist

	Are you here?	Or do you need improvement?	
		Some	Much
15	Go the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction		I do my job

In a health care environment, there will always be some angry patients, problems with family members, and problems with the health care staff. Many of these problems are unique to this profession. After all, few people want to be patients. This in turn, creates an excellent environment for emotional and mental stress.

This case is a example of how positive communication can be used to turn a hostile encounter into a neutral, if not a pleasant, one. Captain Boat was upset because he was unable to get an appointment to see an orthopedic physician. Such encounters happen daily at military facilities when services to retirees are limited.

Going the extra step to ensure customer satisfaction is only one part of the HM rating. The actions of Lt. Christmas and HM Door indicated that they did take that step. First HM Door reacted patiently and sympathetically with Captain Boat. He then transferred Captain Boat’s call to the patient administration section to have the problem resolved. Lt. Christmas offered to help locate a physician in the local community that could take care of the captain’s problem. She then went a step further by offering to explain the benefits available through CHAMPUS.